Anti-semitism

WEAPON OF FASCISM

By WILLIAM WEINER

PRESIDENT I. W. O.

—"One Nation Indivisible . . ."—

The history of America is not alone the chronicle of the clash of American arms on the battlefields of the wars that won our independence and preserved the Union. Nor is our history alone the saga of the mastery of a continent: the building of our great cities, the exploitation of our vast natural resources or the development of the world's greatest industrial nation.

While these things were being done, another event was taking place which in its grandeur was also unparalleled in the modern world. *The American people were born!* They grew from a handful of colonists to number 135 million.

But the American people were dissimilar. They are not and never have been of one ethnic group. They came from every country in the world and their religious, cultural, social and political backgrounds reflected the rich mosaic of mankind from every longitude and latitude of the earth. These venturous and virile peoples from every country created a common bond of brotherhood in the new world—the American people. This is the imperishable product of our civilization.

Enemies of our democracy claim that the multi-national background of our people is the weak point in our armor. And they conspire in this, the most crucial period of our history, to destroy our country by creating racial, religious and social tensions and conflicts between Americans of different origins.

Anti-Semitism is one of the most dangerous of all such antago-

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nisms. It is the first bridgehead of the fascist assault. That was so in Germany during the bloody march to power of Hitler and his Nazi gangs—first the Jews, then the organizations of labor, then the Catholics and Masons—("Divide and Conquer!")—and in the end Germany was driven down the fascist path of war and annihilation.

In this booklet we have printed, in part, the remarks of William Weiner, President of the International Workers Order, made when summarizing the discussion and the actions taken at the IWO sponsored Wartime Inter-Group Unity Conference held in New York City, January 16, 1944. Vital addresses were made to the hundreds of attending delegates by such outstanding church, civic and labor leaders as: Dr. Max Yergan, executive secretary of the National Council for African Affairs; Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, pastor of the Abyssinian Church and former City Councilman of New York; City Councilmen Peter V. Cacchione and Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.; Clifford T. McAvoy, legislative director, Greater New York CIO Industrial Union Council; Mrs. Alice Prentice Barrows of the National Federation of Constitutional Liberties; Roy Wilkins, editor of "The Crisis"; Ferdinand Smith, vice-president of National Maritime Union; Harry S. Jackson, attorney, Harlem People's Committee; Charles Collins, secretary, Negro Labor Victory Committee.

William Weiner is one of America's foremost fraternalists. He emerged from the ranks of labor to noted leadership in the labor movement in its most difficult period. He brought to the people's progressive causes a dynamic, forceful personality, a gift for scholarly expression and uncompromising integrity of principles. Recently returned to activity after long illness, his valuable talents are a welcome re-inforcement of anti-fascist manpower on the home front.

John E. Middleton
Vice-President, IWO

Anti-Semitism WEAPON of FASCISM

This conference and its deliberations are a heartening sign that the unity of all patriotic, anti-fascist groups and organizations in our country is being cemented behind the single-minded purpose of making 1944 the year of decision and victory. We stand at the threshold of a new epoch in history and civilization, an epoch that will be based on the task of wiping out the degradation of Munich and of building a stable world and enduring peace on the great principles laid down at the Moscow, Cairo and Teheran conferences.

ALLIES' UNITY DOOMS HITLER

Moscow and Teheran sealed the doom of Hitler and his satellites. They frustrated his last hope of staving off unconditional surrender (and of rotting in hell) by splitting the United Nations, especially the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and China. At these conferences, a unified strategy of coalition warfare was agreed upon. This strategy—the opening of the second front in Western Europe just as Hitler is being shoved into the abyss of catastrophe by the greatest of all fighting arms, the incomparable Red Army—will soon destroy fascism and all its monstrous works.

But the historic tasks set at Moscow and Teheran signify more than the destruction of Hitlerism and its threat to everything decent and human. They symbolize the unity of the people of the world—forged in suffering and struggle against the fascist beast—and on the foundation of this unity will rise a post-war world which will mark a new and great chapter in man's eternal struggle to achieve freedom from fear, want and tyranny.

U. S. FASCISTS A MENACE

The horizons are bright with hope. But the road is still long and dangerous. Because the beast of fascism knows that it is doomed, it will intensify its frenzied struggles to escape destruction, to break the iron ring that is closing in from the east, south —and soon—from the west. In the very act of dying, fascism seeks to destroy civilization, to leave behind chaos and the seed of civil war in the nations that will survive the holocaust. Let us never forget for a moment that it will do us little good to win the war and lose the peace. And that is now the objective of the treacherous fifth column in the United States—to disrupt national unity, to turn one American group against another, to plunge the country into the hell of fascism, right after our brave soldiers and sailors have played their part in destroying the beast abroad in Europe and Asia.

That is the background against which the discussions and decisions of this conference and similar conferences must be evaluated. Our decisions must help carry out the decisions of Moscow and Teheran, for in carrying out the latter we shall achieve our own specific goal of destroying intolerance and the oppression of minority groups, be they Negroes, Jews, Mexicans, or any other victims of Hitler's agents in this country. And we can attain the goal set here, as well as the universal goals of Moscow and Teheran, by fighting with every ounce of our determination and strength for a unified America, an America which submerges every special interest to the national interest of winning the war as part of the world coalition of the United Nations.

If we use this approach as the key to solving the problems we are tackling, then we will not go wide off the mark as some well-intentioned but misguided individuals do. We will realize with certainty that the outbreaks that have disgraced our country and weakened our national unity—the attacks against Mexicans in Los Angeles; against Negroes in Detroit, Beaumont and elsewhere; the assaults against Jews in Boston, and in our own city—we will see that these attacks are an organized and directed movement seeking to undermine the unity of the country, to sabotage the decisions of Moscow and Teheran, to pave the way for a negotiated peace.

MADE-IN-U.S.A. POGROMS

There is nothing spontaneous about these pogroms and lynch mobs. To look upon them as the pranks of youngsters or the hoodlumism of juvenile delinquents, is to deny facts; is to cover up the real culprits; is to endanger the unity of the nation; is to stab our troops in the back just as they are on the verge of opening the second front. For the truth of the matter is that these attacks against Negroes, Mexicans, Jews and other minority groups, constitute the enemy's invasion of the United States. They make up Hitler's counter-second front on the soil of the United States.

Hitler's second front here in America has well-defined objectives. It is a counter-offensive against our war effort from within. It is designed to break up the nation's iron determination to play its part in forcing the unconditional surrender of Hitler Germany. It is Hitler's last card in his desperate game to stave off defeat, to bring into power in the United States the appeasers and defeatists who want to negotiate peace with fascism in order to save it from complete destruction. A negotiated peace would not only save Hitler from the justice that awaits him and everyone of his bloody henchmen; it would also mean a super-Munich favorable to reaction everywhere.

HOME SPUN NAZI AGENTS

The enemy's invasion of our country is being carried out under the leadership of Nazi agents and their American friends who betray the national interests of the United States in their hatred of democracy and the people and their lust for power. This enemy invasion has as the other phase of its program the establishment of a mass fascist party in the United States so as to win the peace for fascism even if Hitler is ground down and destroyed.

In fighting this enemy invasion, we are fighting to win the war. In seeking to smash the dissemination of racial hatred at its source, we are fighting to realize the principles of Moscow and Teheran, and all that they signify for humanity—and for the American people. We are fighting on one of the main battle fronts; for in repelling the enemy's invasion, we are up against Hitler's boasted secret weapon.

HITLER'S SECRET WEAPON!

That weapon has always been national disunity. That is why France fell in 40 days, betrayed by Hitler's agents from within. But that weapon failed in the Soviet Union; and that is why the Red Army was able first to hold off Hitler's hordes, and now to sow the plains of the Ukraine with the bodies of millions of Hitlerite murderers. And the secret weapon of Hitler will fail in the United States, if we face up resolutely against the evil of race hatred and oppression and crush it so that it will never rise to haunt us again.

Hitler has always made special use of the Jewish people in directing the fire of his secret weapon against the unity of the nations he sought to conquer. His persistent slaughter of the Jews is no mere phenomenon in psychopathology. His sadism always had concrete political aims. These were clearly stated by his SS leader, Werner Best, who said in 1942: "The Jewish question is dynamite with which we blast the forts where the last liberal

snipers have their nests, since countries which abandon Jews thereby abandon their formal Judaized ways with their false ideas of liberty."

JEW-BAITING HELPS HITLER

Here is the real aim of the Nazis exposed in all its bestiality. Attack the Jews to weaken the unity and democracy of the countries that are to be conquered when they are ripe for the kill. The defense of the rights of the Jew to live as a human being is consequently the defense of the cause of the freedom of all humanity. Those agents of Hitler who attack the Jews are after bigger game; their aim is nothing less than the enslavement of the entire American people as the prelude to fascist conquest of the world.

Anti-Semitism is inseparable from the blackest reaction and vilest chauvinism. That has been true throughout all history and is especially true today. As we turn the pages of the story of mankind, we find that the fate of the Jews serves as a barometer of the degree of liberty enjoyed by the people of any given country. Whenever and wherever tyranny ruled with a mailed fist, there the Jews were denied the right to live as human beings. And conversely, wherever and whenever the torch of liberty flamed brightly as an inspiration to humanity, there Jews were given the right to function and live freely and equally with all their fellow-citizens.

FRUITS OF RACIAL EQUALITY

It is no accident, therefore, that where liberty was fought for and won, there the Jews received rights along with everybody else. England, as she emerged from feudalism, signalized the victory of the democratic revolution over tyrant kings by inviting Jews to come to her shores to work and live. In the French Revolution, the walls of the ghettos came tumbling down along with the whole rotten structure of feudalism and its denial of

the rights of man. And in our own American Revolution, Jews fought and died alongside non-Jews, and the political emancipation of the Jews was part of the fight for freedom of the United States from the bondage of tyranny. The whole struggle of the modern world for democracy, for the rights of the common man, has running throughout its various stages a bright thread representing the recognition of the inalienable right of the Jew to live as a human being.

ANTI-SEMITISM A CANCER

It is also no accident that where democracy was unable to triumph, there anti-Semitism flourished and ran rampant. Germany is perhaps the classic example of this truth. Democracy there was never able to destroy the roots of feudalism. These roots were concealed and kept alive in the corrupt and arrogant alliance of the Prussian junkers, the powerful and reactionary landlords, the chauvinistic intellectual aristocracy and the caste-like cliques of militarists—an alliance originally spawned in the ruling classes of feudal Germany from the 11th to the 16th centuries.

In the rotten soil of these feudal remnants, anti-Semitism was nourished and cultivated into a social and political plague. It became one of the contaminated cores in the fascist cancer which finally destroyed the German Republic and brought the German people to the terrible fate that confronts them today. Because anti-Semitism was never wiped out in Germany, fertile ground was prepared for the spread of the inhuman doctrines and practices of Hitlerism.

The hall-mark of reaction and fascism everywhere is the stigmata of anti-Semitism. It was thus in Czarist Russia where the Black Hundreds massacred Jews as part of the systematic slaughter of workers and peasants. And that is what is happening in Argentina and Bolivia where the first acts of the fascist regimes set up by Hitler's agents are directed towards the persecution and degradation of Jews.

I do not cite the Jews as the sole example of fascist hatred and slaughter. In large measure, the persecution of all minorities is a cardinal point in the fascist platform of stirring unrest and provoking bloodshed as a means of destroying the national unity of a country—any country, anywhere on this globe of ours. I have emphasized the role of the Jew because he is the oldest minority people, and his persecution and suffering can be found in every chapter of the world's history. And because of this, Hitler made anti-Semitism—which was always the drum-beater of reaction and tyranny—a major weapon in the fascist arsenal of lies and abominations.

THE PERIL OF ANTIPATHY

My friends, put a Jew-baiter on a pin, and you will see the creature is more than a Jew-baiter. He is also a red-baiter, a Negro-baiter, a liberal-baiter, a baiter of everything that is progressive and forward-looking. The Jew-baiter may start baiting Jews, but he will wind up spewing his hate and wielding his bludgeon against all the people. You cannot ignore Jew-baiting, because it will spread until it poisons and kills all democratic institutions. To ignore Jew-baiting is to put the whole country in dire peril, it is to invite disaster, it is to encourage the victory of American fascism.

CIO president, Phillip Murray, in a recent letter to the Jewish Labor Committee, declared, "American Labor was the first to recognize that the attack on the Jews was the forerunner of a similar assault on labor, religion, and ultimately against mankind itself."

The answer of this conference—and it must become the answer of the entire people—is this: No tolerance of Jew-baiting, labor-baiting, Negro-baiting. That is the secret weapon of Hitler aimed at our national unity, directed toward our losing the war and destroying free America.

The answer of this conference—and it must become the answer of all Americans—is that we are going to fight racial hatred and strife in every form. We cannot preserve democracy and win the war if we permit this enemy invasion of our land, if we allow the agents of Hitler to foment civil war on our home front. Fighting is the answer to the problems we have discussed. That this is so can be seen if we study the experience of Germany. Back in 1895, a prophetic pamphlet was published signed with the initials S.F. Here is what is written:

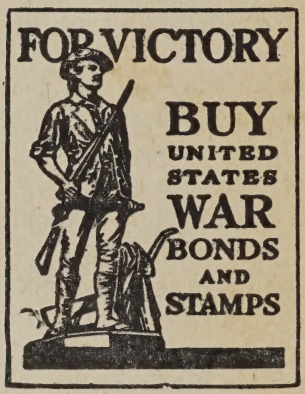
"Whoever does not pay heed to his own interests as a Jew and as a citizen, to the future of his children and to his own highest good, is his own enemy. . . . Is it not tragic that so many men who are entrusted with the responsibility of spiritual and moral leadership of Jewish communities, frequently ask naively whether the work of defense is necessary? Why philosophize that the anti-Semitic movement is culturally and ethically unjustifiable?

"No! A thousand times, no! It is not justifiable. It is an insult to every culture. It is a disgrace to any ethic. It is the arch-enemy of the very concept of humanity. But it is here. It does exist. This is the tragic reality with which we must some day reckon."

Had the fight been started then, perhaps humanity would have been spared the incalculable cost in blood and tears we have had to pay to crush Hitler. Failure to destroy anti-Semitism in Germany contributed mightily to the doom of democracy there and paved the road for the march of the scourge of fascism.

AMERICA FIGHTS RACISM

Let us resolve never to make that terrible mistake here in our own country. We must fight the evil of race hatred until it is destroyed; otherwise, it will destroy not only Jews and Negroes and all minority groups, but all America.



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